

I was able to attend the Annual Mid-Year Conference of the National Congress of American Indians for the first time. Held at the Atlantis Casino and Spa in Reno, Nevada, it was full of information on national issues that have an impact on us, LTBB, and opportunities to meet other Tribal leaders who are more than willing to collaborate in efforts to make things better for our communities. Unlike at the Annual National Convention, which will be held in Tulsa, Oklahoma this year, the sessions and meetings during this smaller conference were more intense and lengthier. Some of the highlights of my attendance are as follows:

- Attended the Strategies for Improving the Financial Capability of Native Youth session:

The moderator was Joanna Donohoe from Seven Sisters Community Development Group. There was an excellent panel that provided specific information and strategies for assisting our youth in becoming more financially capable. The panel consisted of Sherry Salway Black, the Director of the Partnership for Tribal Governance at the National Congress of American Indians who has also been appointed by President Obama to the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability ; Dawson Her Many Horses, Bank of American and the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA); Shawn Spruce, First Nations Development Institute; and, Pamela Mott, NCAI and Treasurer of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation.

Each of the speakers took turns talking about their backgrounds with finance, their philosophies about what we should/could do to instill a healthier attitude about money in our young people, and their current work, in a wide-array of formats, to assist Native people both in their home communities and in others with learning better financial capability.

We were also given information on the NCAI Initiative to increase financial capability:

Components of NCAI Initiative

- Native Financial Education Coalition
- Protect Native Money
- Tribal Exchange Stock Market Game

Native Financial Education Coalition (NFEC)

- Reconvened in 2012
- Held mtgs in Sept 2012 and Feb 2013
- Conducted online survey in Feb 2013
- Recognized Financial Literacy Month in April 2013

www.ncai.org/initiatives/nativefinancial-ed

NFEC Priorities

- Bring partners together
- Research best practices

- Awareness campaigns
- Community well-being

You need to understand finance and economics in the context of your own community; examples, the Cobell Settlement has a specific effect on those that receive the settlement monies and federal budget cut-backs affect our people that get public assistance.

This all started when there were settlements made with tribes recently:

- Settlements
 - Cobell, Keepseagle (250,000-50,000 to each individual), Tribal Trust
- Resources: (e.g. had to deal with Wal-Mart where lots of people were cashing their checks, local banks that usually don't have large amounts of cash available.)
- Webpage – www.ncai.org/ProtectNativeMoney
- Outreach

President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability:

- January 2010-January 2013 by Exec. Order of President
- Executive Order included Tribal Governments...RARE!
- Four Major Recommendations
 1. Financial Literacy into homes and communities
 2. Employers to embrace enhanced responsibility for financial well-being of employees
 3. 110 State, local financial capability councils
 4. Financial capability is a function of education, enlightened regulation and choice architecture – establish online clearinghouse.

We were asked to write on a card what we see as challenges to financial capability in our home communities. Results were:

- Resources
- Personal Financial Management Skills
- Changing Attitudes – Indian people often live in survival mode so it's hard to get them to be able to save and invest money
- Awareness
- Participation
- Parental Buy-In
- Lack of financial institutions
- Tribal leader Buy-in

Shawn Spruce, First Nations Development Institute, Programs Consultant; Financial Education Instructor Training; based in Albuquerque, NM; McKinley Co., NM school-based financial education program coordinator. He spoke about the success of the McKinley Co. program:

1. McKinley Co. NM school-based program
 - Focus of the concept of financial capability
 - Create a culturally-appropriate financial literacy class, LIFE ON YOUR TERMS,
 - Enable High school instructors to more effectively teach financial education classes and for students to improve financial behavior
 - 630 students in 11 partnering high schools
 - Course counts as math credit towards graduation
 - Building Native Communities curriculum
 - Aligned with National Jumpstart Standards
 - Classroom support and guest lectures
 - Workbooks and lesson plans
 - Field trip coordination
 - Experiential learning events
 - Online resources
 - Youth Savings Accounts Media Relations
 - Will be releasing a report later this year on their data and findings

Dawson HerManyHorses spoke about the NAFOA initiatives:

Education:

- Visit their website
- Scholarships
- LEAD Program
- Native American Financial Leaders Academy
- Supporting Students

Professional Development

- ASU & NAFOA Tribal Financial Manager Certificate Program
- Yale School of Management Tribal Leadership Development Program
- Native American Financial Leaders Academy

Survey and discussion showed that 57% of tribal leaders and employees said their tribes' FCO or senior financial officer is non-Indian

96% of tribal leaders stated that it is Extremely Important or Very Important that more young Indian people enter financial careers

96% of tribal leaders and tribal employees said that mentor/intern programs are Extremely Important or Very Important

NAFOA is currently developing the Native American Financial Leaders Academy (NAFLA) a year-long academy for Native American and Native Hawaiian college students designed to help fast-track them into finance and business fields.

Will feature 5 key elements:

- Intensive Prof. Development Curriculum
- Personalized Mentoring
- Skill Development Seminars
- Tribal Focus
- Internships

NAFOA Outreach – follow on Facebook, Twitter, and Linked-In

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Treasurer Mott spoke about her community and the unique things they do to encourage their people to handle their finances in the best way possible for their families and their future. Some of her suggestions included: do an investment policy statement that includes financial education and youth and she said that tribal leaders, who are the ones that hire the investors for the tribe, need to make those investors work for you because, as they make money for the tribe, they are making money for themselves...so make the most of your contract with them.

At Ft. McDowell, in order to get their trust funds at 18, they have to have a high school diploma or GED, if not, they only get a portion of what they would have gotten and they have to wait till they are 23; when they get their first check, the checks are mailed to the Tribal Council and the 18 year olds have to come to a Tribal Council meeting to get their check and hear from the Council about what they want to see from them and other helpful comments. If you want to enact a similar system, make sure you include those requirements in your Revenue Allocation Plan, if you are a gaming tribe, so that it transcends new councils, public backlash, etc. It has worked really well for her people.

- Attended the Tribal Operations and Business During Tight Times session:

The goal of this session was to provide attendees with ideas for making their government operations and enterprises more efficient. The facilitator was a Mark Trahant, who said “we’ve experienced tight times before in our histories,” before introducing the first speaker.

The first speaker was John Sirois, Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of Colville. He talked mostly about their economy and how collaborating with state and local government is important. He also emphasized the importance of economic diversification.

The second speaker was Lacey Horn, Treasurer of the Cherokee Nation, who has been in her position for 18 months. Her presentation was titled: “Sequestration – Take Action:” lacey-horn@cherokee.org

Immediate Action:

- Estimate Reduction
 1. Know how this will affect each program
 2. Cherokee Nation's estimation was based on award letters
 3. Reduce spending by using cost containment measures
 - Examples: Hiring, look at non-essentials, fringe, etc.
 - Travel and Training prioritizing
 - Overtime – manage employees to stay within 40 hr work week so no time and a half.
 - Commitments

Short Term Action:

- Budget Creatively and Proactively
- Evaluate programs
- Outcome based approach
- Locate efficiencies and combine “cross-purposed” programs
- Streamline

GOAL: to maintain services and jobs to the greatest extent possible

Near Term Action:

- Forecast into the future
Almost impossible, but try.
- One approach, ask programs to submit estimated budgets for three years. There is nothing in the budget control act that says that Congress has to fund up to the limits set...may be less!

Inform:

- Your Tribal Council
 - Your Citizens
 - Tribal Newspaper
 - Nation's Press Releases
- Remember!!! This is not your fault...do not make it into a political issue, it isn't.

Use Your Voice and Influence:

- Prepare an impact report
 1. Document real life effects of sequester and share with your senators, congressmen, and congresswomen
 2. Give number of people directly affected.
- Other creative, relevant ways of getting an impact statement out...twitter, facebook, etc.

Accept Change and Affect Change

“This is the way we have always done it” DOESN'T WORK ANYMORE!

Look for ways to utilize taxes and gaming revenue and compacts.

Another very informative presentation during this session was titled, “Lean Thinking in Alaska: Lean Management Implementation at the Chugachmiut Community” by Patrick M. Anderson, Principal Consultant, patrickmanderson907@gmail.com

The Foundation of Lean Thinking:

The Toyota Way: They have True Respect for People, most managers do not respect the people that work for them otherwise they would not threaten them with losing their jobs

W. Edwards Deming – foster a corporate culture that enhances individual creativity and teamwork while honoring mutual trust and respect between labor and management.

Create a workplace where employees succeed:

- Improve from the Bottom Up
- Make Respect Real
- Drive Fear from the Workplace
- Replace bad processes, not people
- Develop a just workplace
- Respect Facts and Data
- Become Non-judgmental – become a scientist and not so subjective

Value Stream Mapping

- Current State Maps (lots of yellow stickers)
- The Castle Wall (Lead Time, Process Time)
- CEDAC (Cause and Effect Diagrams w/addition of cards)
- Affinity Diagrams

Resources:

Lean Thinking Banish Waste and Create Wealth in your Corporation. James P. Womack, Daniel T Hones

Learning to See. Mike Rother and John Shook

Value Stream Mapping to Create Value and Eliminate MUDA. Mike Rother and John Shook

Real Numbers: Management Accounting in a Lean Organization. Jean E Cunningham

I also attended a meeting during a lunch break for Native Vote:

- We saw two disappointing decisions for Indian Country on Tuesday from the Supreme Court: the Voting Rights Act and the ICWA Case. In light of these decisions, they are continuing to work on the upcoming campaigns that will also have a huge impact on our people.
- Mark Trahan- opened up the meeting and talked about Denise Juneau, the first American Indian in Montana to hold a statewide elected position. Juneau received a Bachelor's Degree in English at Montana State University. Her advanced degrees include a Master's Degree from

Harvard Graduate School of Education and a law degree from the University of Montana. He also introduced Jefferson Keel, President of NCAI who said that money and fear deter anyone from running for office. Just let people know who you are, who you represent and how you are going to effect change. The only way we are going to change colonialism is to get our people into the United States Federal Government. He said that there is a fine line between confidence and arrogance; and don't worry about the nitpickers, they will take care of themselves. If you are not being nitpicked, then you are not doing anything. The fact that you are HERE (meaning at the conference) says that there are people who believe in you...they sent you here.

- NCAI Executive Director Jackie Johnson Pata said that she is really passionate about Native Vote...and it started in her home state of Alaska. Her suggestions for getting more politically involved were to start at the local level; get involved in city commissions, school boards, etc. She suggested that Tribes with senators to sponsor internships for young Native people to work in their offices. Tribes could possibly sponsor those internships. She mentioned the WINGS Program - NCAI Intern Program. She stated that there are internships in your state legislatures, too. For youth, she suggested that they work their own tribe on youth councils. Ms. Pata encouraged everyone to be an advocate for a cause and for an issue you care about; follow those issues and get to know the political gurus on television every night; think about getting your youth involved in the Senate Page Program, gives them a chance to get to know the political leaders they see on television in a very personal way.

- I also attended a session titled, "Measuring Success in Native Education"

This session was comprised of presentations discussing how culture and language should drive education reform. The highlight of this session, for me, was the presentation by Dawn Mackety, Ph. D., who is the Director of Research, Data and Policy for the National Indian Education Association. I was excited to learn that she is an LTBB Citizen. Her presentation was titled, "The Role of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the Implementation of Common Core State Standards." She described two case studies in making her point; Jemez Valley Schools and a school in North Carolina that receives a lot of support from the local Indian community and tribe. She showed how schools can attain the requirements of state education standards while also being open to and utilizing culturally-based learning.

- In addition to the break-out sessions, there were also three General Sessions during the week. At each of these, there were updates given on federal legislation and court cases that impact Indian Country. One of the highlights for me was hearing the new Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewel, address the convention. To hear her speech, you can find it on You Tube under the title of "Secretary Sally Jewell speaks to NCAI Mid Year Conference." Being newly appointed, speaking to the NCAI was one of her first activities. She has only been in office for a few months, but is looking forward to working with Indian Country.

Again, I was very grateful to have been able to attend this gathering. It is always a huge learning experience in terms of knowing what is happening on a national scale with Tribes and meeting new people and other tribal leaders. There is a lot of desire out there for tribes to collaborate more on common issues and to increase our economies. I hope that we are able to participate more actively with other tribes and tribal organizations on some of these larger issues and initiatives. I would like to say Miigwech to my community for allowing me to attend.

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